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ABSTRACT

This guide is designed to help the adult education director spread the word about adult education to employers, legislators, city and county officials, school and agency administrators, and students' family, friends, and community. A timeline for sharing success stories is suggested. Detailed information is provided on starting a Sharing Success system. Sample forms appear as necessary. Other topics include contact with the family and employer and working with the institution, community, and media. Suggestions are offered for a luncheon to share success stories with legislators and a party for staff and students. (YLB)

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succ-ess (n). 1. the favorable course or termination of anything attempted.

2. the gaining of position, fame, wealth, etc.

-Syn. achievement, satisfaction, prosperity eminence, station

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A GUIDE TO SHARING STUDENT SUCCESS

with

EMPLOYERS

LEGISLATORS

CITY & COUNTY OFFICIALS

SCHOOL & AGENCY ADMINISTRATORS

and, most of all

FAMILY, FRIENDS, CLASSMATES AND COMMUNITY

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by

Sherry Royce

December 1986

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WHAT IS SUCCESS?:

"SUCCESSFUL" means: Lucky. Fortunate. Happy. Triumphant. Favorable. Flourishing. Prosperous. Victorious. Booming. Winning. Unbeaten. Thriving. Rich. Affluent. Welloff. Propitious. Providential. Bright. Promising. In the ascendant. And, in full swing.

SUCCESS is opportunity calling. It means turning a disadvantage into an advantage.

SUCCESS is determination. It requires knowing where you want to go and committing your all to getting there.

SUCCESS is daring. It calls for understanding when and how to take risks.

SUCCESS is flexibility. It means learning to let go in order to grow.

SUCCESS is versatility. Choosing the right option in the wrong situation.

SUCCESS is faith. It requires a relentless belief in yourself and in others.

SUCCESS is expectation. Anticipating success is half the way to earning it.

SUCCESS is catching. Sharing success is the surest way to keep it.

THE DIRECTOR'S ROLE:

Student success begins with you, the director. For only you can set the climate for success in your program. Success starts at the top with your belief in the ability of adults to learn, with your enthusiasm for instructor innovation, with your determination to seek community involvement, with your flexibility in stretching funding resources, with your daring to lobby for adult education within your institution, and with your recognition of Special Students as a way of sharing success with all those involved in the adult education program.

This GUIDE TO SHARING STUDENT SUCCESS is designed to help you spread the word about adult education to employers, legislators, city and county officials, school and agency administrators and, most of all, to your students' family, friends and community.

SUGGESTED TIME LINE FOR SHARING SUCCESS STORIES

2-MONTH DEVELOPMENT PHASE:

Secure institutional and staff support. Draw up program guidelines. Organize paperwork.

IDENTIFICATION OF CANDIDATES: An On-going Process

Promote program with students, staff and alumni. Sharing Success Suggestion Forms distributed. Schedule review for October for PDE-ABE Success Stories program or for local graduation, as desired.

SELECTION OF STUDENTS: November for PDE Nominations

Students screened by program director and staff. Selection of nominee from three top candidates can be made by Blue Ribbon panel from institution and advisory council as well as staff and an ABE graduate. Nomination sent to PDE.

COMMUNITY AWARENESS

Publicity on ABE finalists released to press. Schedule picture-taking session with school or agency administrators and community officials. Arrange for legislator congratulations. Letter sent to family and employer. If desired, a TV or radio spot scheduled.

Local program nominee not selected by PDE can be honored anyway as Student-of-the-Month.

February for PDE Finalists

STARTING A SHARING SUCCESS SYSTEM:

Each November, the Pennsylvania Department of Education's Division of Adult Basic Education launches a search throughout the Commonwealth for ten outstanding Adult Basic Education students. Success stories are submitted by program administrators and the winner and other finalists are honored at a special session at Pennsylvania's Midwinter Conference each February. Some ABE programs also honor Students-of-the-Year at graduation ceremonies. And a few have arranged for a feature story on the ABE Student-of-the-Month in their school newsletter or local paper.

The program that commits to Sharing Success sets up a process for identifying and honoring its adult learners on a regular basis. Once that system is in place, you will be surprised and delighted at the results. For public awareness and appreciation of adult education is only half the story. The real magic of Sharing Success is in internal awareness as students and staff learn more about each other. Sharing Success can be the bond that binds a program by increasing sensitivity of understanding and pride in accomplishment.

DECIDE how often you want to honor special students. Once a month, once a year, or somewhere in between. It will depend on the size of your program. And the amount of time you have to spend. A good estimate is eight hours staff time for each student award.

ANNOUNCE the Sharing Success plan to all staff and students. Don't just send out a memo. Talk to staff and students and get them to suggest criteria. Share your enthusiasm and encourage theirs. Be sure to let your administration and advisory council know what you are planning. And get their suggestions too. Spread the word through the Alumni Association if you have one. The work you put in on setting up the system will be worth it later.

ORGANIZE all the paperwork. You will need to develop the following forms:

SHARING STUDENT SUCCESS & SIGN-OFF FORM
CRITERIA FOR SELECTION
SUCCESS STORY NOMINATION FORM

4.

SAMPLE

SHARING SUCCESS SUGGESTION FORM

All adult learners are special. Do you know someone in this program who **(Sample criteria given below):**

- ***has overcome substantial difficulties in order to attend classes.**
- ***has shown remarkable achievement despite overwhelming difficulties.**
- ***has proved an inspiration to others; has promoted and/or supported adult education.**
- ***has plans to or has used the adult education experience as a stepping stone to higher education, training or career development.**

If so, please write a paragraph or two telling us all about this special student. The student must complete the SIGN-OFF statement in order to be considered for an award.

I suggest _____ for a student award
Name of Student
because:

SUGGESTED BY: _____

SIGN-OFF: **DATE:**

I agree to having my name submitted for a Student Award. I understand that my story and picture may appear in a booklet, newsletter or newspaper.

Signature of Suggested Student.

CALL FOR CANDIDATES. Send out your first set of Sharing Student Success forms with a flourish. Do you want suggestions from staff, other students, and alumni? If you open the process beyond staff recommendations, make sure that a Call for Candidates is announced in every class.

SCHEDULE the review process and keep to it. You may decide to call for Sharing Success Suggestion Forms the first Monday in October for the PDE award. Or the first Monday in May, in time for graduation. You can do the initial screening with help from a few staff members. But it is both politically astute and genuinely helpful to include members of your agency, school board or advisory council on the selection committee along with ABE staff and perhaps an ABE graduate. So schedule a formal committee meeting to review the top three candidates two weeks after the forms are received.

ASSIGN the job of interviewing the top three candidates to the ablest writers. Or, write up the nomination yourself, if that is your specialty. The interview will go more smoothly if you:

*Explain the reasons for the interview and ask permission to tape the discussion. BE CAREFUL THAT YOU DON'T EXPLOIT. Make sure the adult learner understands that sensitive facts may be shared with others if the story is published.

*Begin the conversation with questions that are easily answered by facts. Proceed from there to questions involving attitudes and emotions.

*Match your mood to the students'. Let the weight of silence encourage discussion. Remember to listen, not talk.

PRESENT the candidates to your Blue Ribbon Selection Committee in an informal session, if at all possible. Or, provide the committee with interview reports. A CRITERIA FOR SELECTION checklist will enable them to weigh the merits of the various candidates. Regardless, of the final determination, it is thoughtful to have the committee present Awards of Merit to those candidates interviewed.

6.

SAMPLE:

SUCCESS STORY NOMINATION FORM

NAME OF NOMINEE: _____ **SS#:** _____

ADDRESS: _____

_____

_____ **TEL:** _____

REASON FOR NOMINATION:

(THE BACKGROUND Questions suggested by PDE's Division of ABE as the basis of the Success Story Nomination are given below. These can also be considered when planning a local award or feature article on student success).

1. How many grade levels of education had the nominee completed before he/she entered the program?
2. What reasons caused the nominee to quit school?
3. When did the nominee enter your program?
4. Is he/she still enrolled, or has he/she achieved his/her personal goals and stopped?
5. What problems in academics, attendance, etc. did the nominee have in the adult program?
6. What are the nominee's plans for the future, such as a career, further education, training, etc?
7. In what, if any, organizations or activities is the nominee involved?
8. Other relevant comments you wish to make, such as his/her being a promoter, supporter of the program, an inspiration to others, etc.

NOMINEE'S EMPLOYER (if any): _____

EMPLOYER'S ADDRESS: _____

Employer's Telephone: _____ _____

Name of Nominator: _____

Program Agency: _____

Agency Address: _____

_____

Agency Tel: _____ _____

STUDY the criteria used by the Division of ABE to evaluate the success story nominations submitted to them. Your student will have a much better chance of being selected as the Outstanding Adult Basic Education Student of the Year or one of the ten runners-up if you tailor your comments to these criteria:

* **Had to leave school because of external demands placed upon him/her.**

* **Had entered by October of the year, thus, able to complete 200 ABE/ESL hours or 100 GED class hours by the end of the semester.**

* **Has continued in the program or has met his/her personal goals.**

* **Had difficult circumstances to overcome in academics, attendance, etc. in order to attend ABE, ESL, GED classes.**

* **Has plans for a career, further education, further training, etc.**

* **Has been active in organizations or activities.**

* **Has been a promoter and/or supporter of the program and/an inspiration to others.**

SUBMIT your nomination form and wait until the ten ABE finalists are announced. If your student is not among them, a local award can still be given. And if your nominee is one of the lucky ten, the following recognition activities can be planned:

LETTER TO THE FAMILY **LETTER TO THE EMPLOYER**
AWARD PRESENTATION BY INSTITUTION'S BOARD
FEATURE STORY IN NEWSPAPER
RADIO TALK SHOW **TELEVISION COVERAGE**

8.

LETTER TO THE FAMILY:

In order to succeed, the adult learner must often place time for school and study ahead of family concerns. So individual success is by virtue of family commitment. A letter to the family, at the very least, should indicate that we understand and appreciate their sacrifice. If the student is to be honored by your institution, then a special place should be made for the family at the ceremony.

****

SAMPLE:

February 198-

Dear _____,

I know you must share our great excitement and pride in the accomplishments of your wife/husband/daughter/son, etc. To be named an ABE Student of the Year for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania means you are one of the very best of the 30,000 adults who attend ABE, ESL or GED classes each year.

Yes, your w/h/d/s is truly a remarkable person. But no one can do the job alone. We all need backing and encouragement from family. And so, Congratulations! You, too, are a winner. For in sharing the striving for accomplishment, you have become part of the Success Story.

We will be honoring your w/h/d/s at our monthly board meeting. It will be held February __, 198-, in the Conference Room at John Groves High School. Between 8:00 and 8:15 pm, a short program of speeches by our superintendent, your w/h/d/s' employer and Congressman Fisher of the 43rd district has been planned. Do call me during the day at 327-4401 and let me know how many members of your family will be attending the celebration.

Sincerely yours,

****

CONTACT WITH THE EMPLOYER:

Contact with an employer should be made ONLY AFTER discussing the situation with the award winner. If the student thinks this is a good idea, a letter should be sent to the organization's top executive with a xerox copy to Personnel and the student's immediate boss. If the student is to be honored by your institution, you may want to invite the employer to take part in the ceremonies.

SAMPLE:

February 198-

Dr. Edward Powers, Director
St. Regis Hospital
1000 Wonder Way
Hotspot, PA 19992

Dear Dr. Powers:

As director of the Hotspot Adult Education Program, It gives me great pleasure to inform you that your employee, Mrs. Tracy Loring, has been selected by the Pennsylvania Department of Education to receive a unique honor. From among the 30,000 adults enrolled in the Commonwealth's adult education classes, she has been chosen as one of ten outstanding Students-of-the Year.

We are all so proud of her. Her courage in the face of a crippling car accident, her determination to support her four children, and her cheerfulness and diligence combine to inspire her classmates to put forth their best efforts. I would imagine she has a similar uplifting effect at work.

On February __, 198-, our School District will honor Mrs. Loring at our monthly board meeting. Our superintendent, Dr. Kane, and Congressman Fisher of the 43rd district will take part in a 15-minute ceremony, scheduled for 8:00 pm. We would be honored if you, or a representative of the hospital would join us in this celebration. We would be most pleased to place you on the program if you would care to say a few words on behalf of the hospital. Do call me during the day at 327-4401 and let me know who will be representing the hospital.

Sincerely yours,

_____

ABE PROGRAM DIRECTOR

WORKING WITH YOUR INSTITUTION:

Sharing ABE Student and Program Success must begin at home. Unless your institution's administration and board understand the value of your adult education program to the organization and to the community, you have not done your job as a program director. Promotion aimed at legislators, community agencies and city and county officials, even PR for the general public, should be secondary to selling your story "at home."

The first time is the hardest. Once your institution takes part in planning and selecting your nomination for ABE Student-of-the-Year, the follow-up award ceremony should be "a natural." Start simply the first year. And expand your efforts each year thereafter. Planning the presentation will go more smoothly, if you:

*Work directly with your institution's director of management services and/or PR specialist. Their contacts with legislators, community officials and local media may be better than yours.

*Remember, to keep the institution's name UP FRONT. Sharing success means allocating credit "above" as well as "below."

*A regularly-scheduled board meeting is ideal for award ceremonies. Place the presentation at the beginning of the meeting. And keep it short.

*Ask your institution's chief official to make the presentation. Offer to write some remarks that he/she can adapt. Mention the class site and the student's teacher, tutor and/or aide.

WORKING WITH YOUR COMMUNITY:

Successful adult education programs are embedded in the communities they serve. Community members who can play a role in the local presentation include: the student's employer, agencies or volunteer groups with linkage to your program and direct involvement with the student, state legislators from the student's district, and city, county or municipal officials.

No more than three short speeches are feasible in the fifteen-minute presentation you have planned. One belongs to your

institution's chief official. Select two community members you know, or feel comfortable asking the first year. Once you gain confidence and establish a track record, calling the mayor or your legislator to take part in the presentation will seem easier to do. Remember, you're not in this alone. Your institution has good contacts: Use them.

WORKING WITH THE MEDIA:

Start out with confidence. The Media is always interested in human interest stories. And ABE Student Success stories have just that right combination of pathos and drama, of defeats and victories, of simple people performing unusually well. Your Success Stories will sell themselves. What you need to do is:

*Get to know the feature writers, radio talk show hosts and local TV news directors. Have them explain their time spots and deadlines.

*Find someone in your program or your institution who can write an exciting one-page synopsis of a Student Story. You don't have to write the feature - the Media will do that. All you have to do is Attract Their Attention.

*The advantage lies with the small towns. In the larger cities, unless your story is unusual and dramatic, your best bet for coverage lies in having a well-known community leader take part in your presentation ceremony.

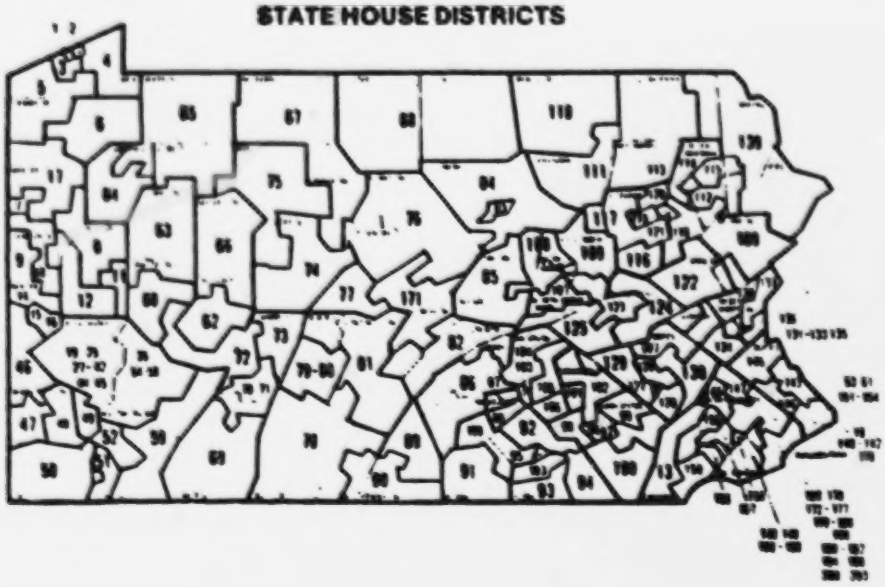
THE PRINTED WORD: When sending out a story to the press, don't forget about business and industry's in-house Newsletters and Community and Church Bulletins. Success stories can serve as vehicles for recruitment as well as program promotion and newsletters and bulletins are excellent in that respect.

RADIO AND TV TALK SHOWS: Sometimes you have a student who has a sense of mission about adult education; one who has the gift of gab and likes to exercise it. Try out a TV or Radio Talk Show as a "dynamic duo" and reap the rewards that sharing success can bring.

KNOW YOUR LEGISLATORS

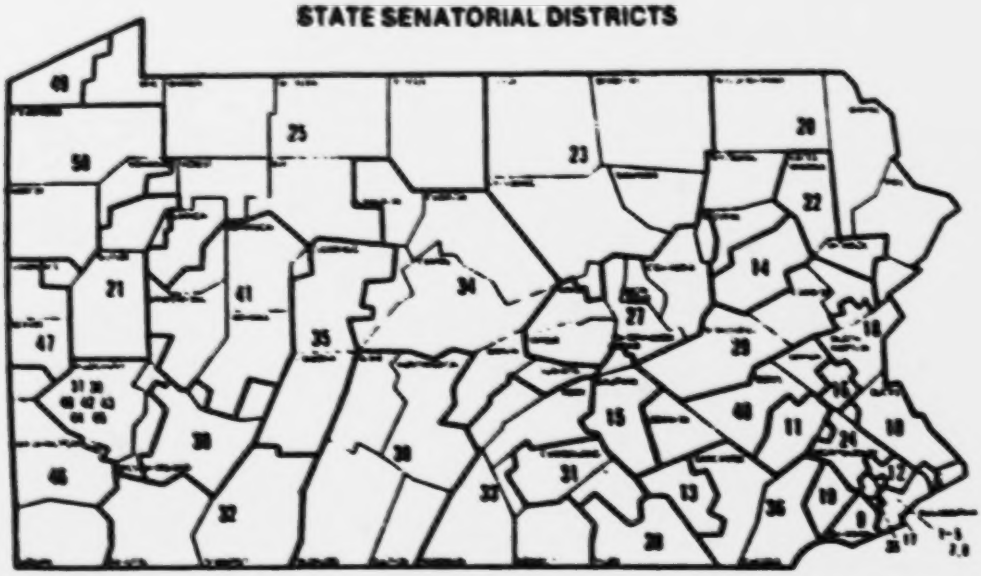
There are 203 members of the PA House of Representatives. Identify the districts served by your program. List your representatives' name, address, telephone number and district in the space provided on page 14.

STATE HOUSE DISTRICTS



There are 50 State Senators. Identify the Senatorial District (s) served by your program. List your Senator (s) name, address and phone number in the space provided on page 14.

STATE SENATORIAL DISTRICTS



THE LEGISLATIVE LUNCHEON

Each year, we share Student Success Stories with Legislators at the Adult Education Midwinter Conference's Legislative Luncheon which takes place immediately before the session honoring ABE Students-of-the-Year. The success of this luncheon depends upon your efforts in the field.

Members of the Pennsylvania Senate and House of Representatives should be contacted to take part in a local celebration. PAACE will invite them to the Legislative Luncheon. Work with your Legislator's Education Aide to have your student meet with his Representative and Senator. Arrange for pictures to be taken at this meeting in your home town. Follow up on PAACE's invitation with a call made by your administrator suggesting that he/she is looking forward to lunching with the Legislator during Midwinter Conference.

Your Representative or Senator may wish to present a Certificate of Honor to your student at the luncheon. Even if the Legislator cannot be present, this certificate could be presented by the Legislator's aide.

Both parties in Pennsylvania have shown their support for Adult Basic Education by providing state funding for adult literacy efforts. Remember to thank your Legislator for that support. Suggest that attendance at the Legislative Luncheon will effectively demonstrate how that money will be put to use.

SHARING SUCCESS WITH STAFF and OTHER STUDENTS

Throw a party for staff and students. You deserve it. If your outstanding student is a graduate, arrange a reunion. It's a really good way to launch an Alumni Association. Spread the happiness around. Adult education is what you make it. Look around at your classrooms. What do you see? Excellence is important, but it is not enough. Adult education is teaching for life. As such, it requires shared learning and merits shared success.

LIST OF LOCAL LEGISLATORS

Senate District	NAME	ADDRESS	Telephone

House District	NAME	ADDRESS	Telephone